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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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NEW AND DIFFERENT

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USDA Agencies Formed and Re-Formed As of April 2, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a new agency -- the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) -- and a renamed agency, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) formerly the Consumer and Marketing Service (C&MS). It all started when the regulatory functions of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) -- animal health, veterinary biologics, plant protection, and agricultural quarantine inspection -- were joined into a new agency known as Animal and Plant Health Service (APHS). The "I" was added to APHS when the meat and poultry inspection programs of C&MS were transferred to the new agency. AMS, formerly C&MS, retained its functions of standardization and grading, market news, egg products inspection, and other commodity and marketing services and related regulatory programs. The reorganization is designed to enable USDA to carry out its responsibilities for animal and plant health protection, meat and poultry inspection, and marketing service activities more effectively. Understand? (GOT IT?)

BOAC MARCHES THROUGH GEORGIA

Brings Along A National Award. The Berrien County Chapter of the Future Farmers of America in Nashville, Ga., are the winners of the first national FFA-BOAC contest. BOAC, which stands for "Build Our American Communities," is a nation-wide program involving young people in making their communities better places in which to live. The program is jointly sponsored by USDA's Farmers Home Administration, the National FFA, and the Lilly Endowment Inc., Indianapolis, Ind. It includes classroom instruction, community development activities, and in the case of the national contest winners, hard work and community cooperation. To celebrate the honor earned by the Berrien County FFA, local citizens joined with the Chapter members in hosting all FFA chapters in Georgia and Federal and State dignitaries at a Rural Development Action Rally. The people of Berrien County have good reason to be proud of the FFA-BOAC award; Berrien County is a changed place. Under the BOAC program and the slogan, "Build a Better Berrien County," the FFA chapter involved all county organizations in an area-wide beautification effort. Results included: campuses of all eight schools in the county were cleaned and landscaped; all school clubs in the county participated in a county-wide clean-up; city and county officials provided equipment and materials for the clean up work; and the county landfill was provided with old cars, trash, and rubbish. The campaign encouraged citizens to beautify their community, homes and businesses, resulting in a complete renovation of Nashville. More than 1200 students and 4000 citizens took part.



Nutritional Information Dividends. Consumer demand for information on food composition and nutrient content has spurred plans for a government-industry nutrition information data bank. Nucleus for the proposed National Data Center for Food Consumption would be the USDA publication, "Composition of Foods," which gives the nutrient make up of more than 2,500 food items. The information would be continually expanded and updated as new data becomes available from industry sources and from expertise provided by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. The data, to be fed into a computer storage bank, will give nutritional information for raw products, fresh or processed food at the market, and food prepared for eating. Ultimately, the bank could include information about food values by variety, breed of plant, stage of maturity, growing season, and geographical location. It is hoped the nutrition information will form the beginning of a universal coding system that could be used in inventory control as well as food consumption research and dietary surveys.

ENVIRONMENTAL PARTICIPATION

Try COEP. . . You'll Like It! COEP (Cooperative Outdoor Environmental Programs) is one of the latest ways in which citizens, young and old alike, can do something to help the environment. USDA's Forest Service has established COEP to give people a chance to participate in the environmental enhancement of the national forest lands. COEP offers both commercial and non-commercial projects in Environmental Learning, Homes for Wildlife, Interpreting Nature, Trees for Better Living, and Woodsy Owl Environmental Quality Campaign. Here's an example of how COEP works. A company may have purchasers of its products return the product labels. The company then deposits with the Forest Service a certain amount of money for each label returned. These funds are used by the Forest Service for environmental projects on national forest lands. Or, an organization may sponsor fund raising activities with the funds being deposited with the Forest Service for a new environmental project or maintenance of an existing one. In both cases the Forest Service receives funds for needed environmental improvements and citizens know they have contributed to the betterment of the National Forests. One COEP project has been a huge success already. The Hunt-Wesson Company has had over one million of its product labels returned in a "Trees for Better Living" project. The funds the company has deposited with the Forest Service have resulted in the establishment of three National Children's Forests where trees are being planted on fire-ravaged national forest lands. For more information on COEP, write Director of Information and Education, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

And Unsuspected Returnees. Is your summer vacation going to be a foreign affair? Have fun -- but please don't pack pests in your luggage when you head for home. Fruits, plants, meats, and other plant or animal products might provide a taste treat to friends back home or add a fancy touch to your flower garden. But these souvenirs can also carry destructive plant or animal pests and diseases. Many foreign pests are not dangerous in their native environment; natural enemies help keep them in check. But just one piece of fruit or a small plant brought back by an unsuspecting traveller could harbor "hitchhiking" pests. Let loose in the U.S., these pests could create havoc with farms, forests, gardens, and livestock. For this reason, it is unlawful to bring plant and animal products into the country without proper inspection. To enforce the quarantines, it is necessary to have agricultural quarantine inspectors check passenger baggage at ports of entry -- a slight inconvenience to travellers worth the protection it affords our environment. If you think you will be bringing home any plant or meat products from your trip abroad, you can find out in advance what you are permitted to bring into the country by writing to Quarantine, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

VISUAL AID

Ideas For Teachers, Talkers, and Programmers. Teaching a class? Giving a talk? Running a program? Why not show a filmstrip or slide set? The recently revised catalog of USDA slide sets and filmstrips lists 18 categories from which to choose: agricultural economics, beautification, civil defense, conservation, home economics, housing, nutrition, pests, pesticides, and wildlife. The new catalog lists many of the older sets plus 21 presentation not listed in the previous edition. All USDA slide sets and filmstrips are in color; cassettes with narration, music, and frequency pulses to change frames with automatic equipment are available with new releases. Though the catalog is free -- while the supply lasts -- the presentation listed in it are for sale only. Complete instructions for ordering are included. To get a copy, write for "MP-1107" to the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

PLANT TREES FOR SHADE AND BEAUTY

And Other Nice Reasons. Trees can do more for your neighborhood than add beauty -- though this is itself a nice reason to have them around. Trees help screen the sun's harsh rays, soften stark lines of buildings, and add graciousness to the simplest residence. They can give a feeling of welcome to streets that are usually only functional, cool surrounding areas, and filter dust particles. Well-planned shade tree plantings, in fact, can provide many years of beauty and comfort while giving the landscape a look of permanence and dignity. To do their job satisfactorily, trees must be carefully selected and maintained. The use you intend for your trees and the planting location should guide you in the selection. Do you want trees for quick shade, flowers, heavy shade? Consideration must also be given to the form -- slim and upright or broad-spreading and low-hanging; the mature size and whether the growth rate and longevity are limiting factors; and the availability of suitable trees and size of the tree planting. A popular USDA publication, "Trees for Shade and Beauty" (G-117) can offer prospective tree planters some good advice. Copies of the booklet, which has been slightly revised recently, are available for 10 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

FACTS, FACTS, FACTS

In Concise and Useful Form. The revised "Fact Book of U.S. Agriculture," the most extensive one to date, is now available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Statistics presented in useful form and clear, concise information are included under such major headings as "Farm Operation," "Food Marketing," and "Improving The Rural Social Environment." Easy-to-read-and-understand information on all important USDA program activities -- from research to rural credit to regulatory laws -- is to be found in one section. The fact book is a particularly handy reference for persons whose work touches on food marketing and food programs. Single copies only may be requested from Special Reports Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

MAY PLENTIFUL FOODS

Feel Like A Spring Chicken For Dinner? Broiler-fryers are featured on the Plentiful Foods List for May. Other tasty items on the List are milk and nonfat dry milk; fresh potatoes and potato products such as frozen french fries and instant mashed; canned peaches and canned fruit cocktail; and eggs. For June the Plentifuls will be milk and dairy products, broiler-fryers, eggs, and split peas.

A NUTRITIOUS COMIC BOOK

Food Facts and Fun. "A good diet can put more 'soul' in your stroll and more glide in your stride," to quote the main character of a new comic book, "Food Facts and Fun With Butter and Boop." Stars of the comic book are Butter and his dog Boop, who in "real life" are characters of a nationally syndicated comic strip. With the aid of some friends, Butter and Boop get the message across to a classmate that good nutrition and good eating habits can improve his performance in the classroom and his fun on the playground. The bright conversation and simple format of the comic book will capture and hold the attention of young readers while they learn the importance of good food habits. "Food Facts and Fun With Butter and Boop," a cooperative product of USDA's Extension Service and the Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc., is designed to communicate a "feeling" for better nutrition to innercity children in a simple and direct way. The 16-page, full color comic book may be reprinted by public or private groups. Information on reprinting and costs is available from the Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc., 1425 K Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Single sample copies may be requested by writing to Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

ORNAMENTAL INFORMATION

Leaflet Lists Bulletins. Horticulturists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service are constantly prying into the secrets of how plants grow and flower, how to rid plants of diseases and insects, how to originate and improve ornamental plants, and how to save time and labor in making our surroundings more attractive and healthful. Much of the information obtained is reported in publications designed especially for home gardeners. More than forty of these publications are listed in a new leaflet issued by ARS. "Publications on Ornamentals for Town and Country Gardeners" lists titles that cover such topics as: lawns, trees, indoor gardens, house plants, shrubs for shady areas, ground covers, perennials, annuals, fertilizers, spring and summer flowering bulbs, roses, chrysanthemums, azaleas and rhododendrons, flowering dogwoods and crabapples, boxwoods. Directions on how to order the bulletins, the price of each publication, and an order blank are included in the leaflet. Supplies of the lists are limited, but single free copies may be obtained -- as long as they last -- by writing to Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

LABELED FOR YOU LEAFLET

Now In Spanish. "Meat and Poultry: Labeled For You," one of a series of USDA leaflets giving tips on meat and poultry products, is now available in Spanish. As in the English version, the leaflet tells label requirements for Federally inspected meat and poultry products, gives tips on how to read ingredients information on the labels, and gives brief explanations of Federal inspection marks. Single free copies of "Carne de Res y De Aves de Corral" (G-172-S) may be requested from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone (202) DU8-5437. Please include your zipcode.